

Appl. No. 09/976,312
Amdt. Dated June 8, 2004
Reply to Office Action of March 9, 2004

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): Elastically stretchable disposable pants having a central longitudinal axis and comprising:

a pair of elastically stretchable sheet members;
a front waist region having side edges;
a rear waist region opposed to said front waist region;
a waist-opening and a pair of leg-openings defined by bonding said front and rear waist regions at edge portions thereof to each other; and

a pair of spaced apart substantially inelastic guide zones provided between said central longitudinal axis and each of said side edges of said front and rear waist regions, and extending longitudinally of said pants between said waist-opening and each of each of said leg-openings, each of said substantially inelastic guide zones of said pair of substantially inelastic guide zones comprising ~~an~~ a discrete array of discrete inelastic portions of the elastically stretchable sheet members, said discrete arrays having upper terminal ends which terminate near the waist-opening and lower terminal ends that are spaced apart from the leg-openings, said substantially inelastic guide

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zones being configured to prevent portions of the disposable diaper in a vicinity of the substantially inelastic guide zones from stretching along a direction parallel to the central longitudinal axis.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The pants according to Claim 1, wherein said pair of elastically stretchable sheet members comprise layers of elastically stretchable fibrous nonwoven fabric and said substantially inelastic guide zones comprise portions of said nonwoven fabric which are molten and solidified so as to have substantially no elastic stretchability.

Claim 3 (currently amended): Elastically stretchable disposable pants comprising:

- a pair of elastically stretchable sheet members comprising layers of elastically stretchable fibrous nonwoven fabric;

- a front waist region having side edges;

- a rear waist region opposed to said front waist region;

- a waist-opening and a pair of leg-openings defined by bonding said front and rear waist regions at edge portions thereof to each other; and

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substantially inelastic guide zones provided between said central longitudinal axis and each of said side edges of said front and rear waist regions, and extending longitudinally of said pants between said waist-opening and each of each of said leg-openings, said substantially inelastic guide zones comprising inelastic strips of sheet material that have surface areas and are superimposed over continuous surface areas of one of said non-woven fabrics which superimposed continuous surface areas are coextensive with the surface area of said substantially inelastic strips, said inelastic strips being bonded to said ~~over an outer surface of~~ one of said nonwoven fabrics so as to be exposed on an outer surface of said pants and so that said substantially inelastic guide zones have substantially no elastic stretchability, said substantially inelastic guide zones being configured to prevent portions of the disposable diaper in a vicinity of the substantially inelastic guide zones from stretching along a direction parallel to the central longitudinal axis.

Claim 4 (previously presented) The pants according to Claim 1, wherein a pad member comprising a liquid-pervious topsheet, a liquid-impervious backsheet and a liquid-absorbent core disposed between said liquid-pervious topsheet and said liquid-impervious backsheet is attached to an inner surface of said pants and extends from said front waist region to said rear waist region.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The pants according to Claim 1, wherein said pants comprise a liquid-pervious topsheet, a liquid-impervious backsheet and a liquid-absorbent core disposed between said liquid-pervious topsheet and said liquid-impervious backsheet and extending from said

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front waist region to said rear waist region, and of said liquid-imperious backsheet and said liquid-pervious topsheet at least said liquid-impervious backsheet is formed from said pair of elastically stretchable sheet members.

Claim 6 (previously presented): The pants according to Claim 1, wherein each of said substantially inelastic guide zones is located aside toward said side edges of said front and rear waist regions.

Claim 7 (previously presented): The pants according to Claim 4, wherein each of said substantially inelastic guide zones is located in a vicinity of said pad member.

Claim 8 (previously presented): The pants according to Claim 1, wherein the upper terminal ends of the inelastic zones are spaced apart from the waist-opening.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The pants according to Claim 1, wherein the array of discrete inelastic portions of the elastically stretchable sheet members comprises a linear array.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The pants according to Claim 2, wherein a pad member comprising a liquid-pervious topsheet, a liquid-impervious backsheet and a liquid-absorbent core disposed between said liquid-pervious topsheet and said liquid-impervious backsheet is attached to an inner surface of said pants and extends from said front waist region to said rear waist region.

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Claim 11 (previously presented): The pants according to Claim 2, wherein said pants comprise a liquid-pervious topsheet, a liquid-impervious backsheet and a liquid-absorbent core disposed between said liquid-pervious topsheet and said liquid-impervious backsheet and extending from said front waist region to said rear waist region, and of said liquid-imperious backsheet and said liquid-pervious topsheet at least said liquid-impervious backsheet is formed from said pair of elastically stretchable sheet members.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The pants according to Claim 2, wherein each of said substantially inelastic guide zones is located aside toward said side edges of said front and rear waist regions.

Claim 13 (previously presented): The pants according to Claim 10, wherein each of said substantially inelastic guide zones is located in a vicinity of said pad member.